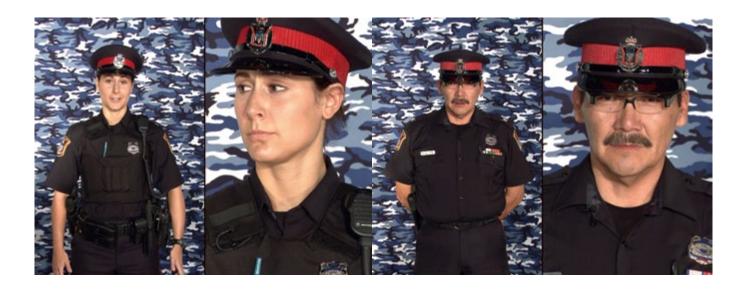## Living Pictures /

Wo/Men in Uniform

Video Installation, 2007
/ Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina, Canada.

Upon seeing What Belongs to Them, a Canadian curator named Annette Hurtig asked me to make one of my Living Pictures for her. Since the first day of the war in Iraq, I had wanted to make a film with the military – to film a Living Pictures work with professionals who can make life and death judgments over others. There are only two professions in the world that can satisfy this condition: the army and the police. But after months of negotiations, we weren't able to get the authorisation from the Canadian army.

I finally started filming with the police force in Regina, who had been accused by Amnesty International of the disappearance of hundreds of young Aboriginal women (though this was never elucidated further). Regina is also the city with the highest crime rate in Canada. Two years earlier, some members of the Regina police had been condemned for abandoning homeless Aboriginal men out in the Saskatchewan plains, in the middle of winter, 50 kilometers from the nearest buildings. The men froze to death.

Upon my arrival, the chief of police took me to see the director of public relations. We had a very cordial interview. Even so, two hours later, I was told that my 'ideology' did not seem to correspond with that of the police force. Negotiations finally started with the police chief. We agreed that he could censor my work before it was exhibited and that he himself would choose which police officers would be filmed. This was no problem, as I never cast my videos. I am opposed to the modernist idea of working with the best model. I work with the extreme complexity of bodies and my tools are not those used in journalism. My work consists of bringing to light an invisibility hidden behind social constructions and learnt conventions. Eventually, he censored four minutes of the video and I came to the exhibition opening with four other minutes that he hadn't seen. The whole city came to see it.